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Greeley vs. Grant.

The Duty of True Democrats.





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GREELEY VS. GRANT.

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The Duty of True Democrats.

AN OPEN-LETTER BY HON. PHILLIP CLAYTON, OF
GEORGIA.

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WHAT A LIFE-LONG DEMOCRAT THINKS—LETTER OF
GEN. JOHN A. DIX, OF NEW YORK.

ATLANTA, GA., July 23, 1872.

To the voters of Georgia:

When the Baltimore Convention dissolved the Democratic party, by substituting a new platform of principles for the time-honored one it was their pride to proclaim and their boast to maintain; and when upon this new platform they placed a candidate with whom they had antagonized more than a quarter of a century, it left each individual Democrat to choose between the only two candidates in the field, General Grant and Mr. Greeley. In the exercise of the right which belonged to each individual member, and in obedience to the stern necessity their action had imposed, I gave publicity to the course, which I had oft repeated in private circles, I intended to pursue. In doing so I have aroused the indignation of that portion of the press of this State who have determined, some from choice and some from their irresistible despotism of party, to support Mr. Greeley. Their modes of expressing their disapprobation are various and amusing—one thinks and so says, "I have run the thing in the ground;" another says one P. Clayton has written a letter in favor of Grant;" another is merciful on account of my former position and the standing of my family, while another has a statement that I was influenced to the course I have thought proper to pursue from motives of interest. I mention these, not that I am going to make war upon the press, but to remind them that courtesy, in any discussion, whether moral, legal or political, is the distinguishing characteristic of a gentleman; and while, from the manner in which I have been treated, I am under no obligation to them to impart the information, if, in the future, they will profit by the instruction, they are welcome to the charitable donation.

The people of Georgia are now interested in but one issue in the pending controversy for President, and that involves exclusively their honor. In my opinion they can vote for General Grant and maintain it. They can not vote for Mr. Greeley without trailing it in the dust.

In my former letter I gave only some general reasons for the course I intended to pursue, knowing that it was impossible, having regard for the truth of history, to controvert the reasons for my opposition to Mr. Greeley.

The Baltimore Convention acted more like a mob, if they have been correctly reported, than like statesmen seeking the public good and guarding the public interest. The Washington CHRONICLE, the Washington Patriot, and the Baltimore Sun (see their issues of the 11th and 12th instants) represented in their report of the proceedings of said convention that the old song of "John Brown" was sung on the occasion, and that when Mr. Bayard, of Delaware, attempted to speak in favor of Democratic principles he was hissed.

Such was the birth of this new party and new candidate. Other comment is unnecessary, than the inquiry, which addresses itself to every voter in Georgia, "Can you maintain your honor by voting for such a candidate or sustaining such a coalition?" The cry of, "anybody to beat Grant" may sustain you under excitement, but when the calm hour of reflection comes, as it will, you will be mortified in the remembrance that you suffered your judgment and your justice to be influenced by your passions and prejudices. Preliminary to investigating the life and history of this new-found favorite to Southern sympathy, I propose to remind the voters of Georgia of the manner in which

they have been betrayed by the Baltimore convention and the acknowledged mode of how they are to be beguiled.

The first exposition of the action of the Baltimore Convention took place at Wilmington, N. C., on the 12th inst. (See *Washington Patriot* of the 13th, the Democratic organ.) The two principal speakers were Senator Tipton, of Nebraska, and Senator Stockton, of New Jersey, representatives of the two wings of the coalition. Senator Stockton said, on that occasion, "There was a wide difference between the antecedents of the preceding speaker (Senator Tipton) and himself. He was proud to say of himself that he had always been, was now, and always would be a Democrat. He was astonished at himself, finding he had come here to ask these people to vote for such a man as Horace Greeley. He was not surprised at his colleague (Mr. Tipton) for doing so; but for himself he could hardly comprehend how it came about. He had been sent by the people of New Jersey to the Baltimore Convention without instructions. He believed his constituents did not want him to vote for Mr. Greeley, and on the first ballot he was one of that small number who had voted against him. His people did not want Mr. Greeley; so far as they were concerned they would have elected a Democrat. It was your Southern men who did this. You forced them upon us and now we shall look to you in November to vindicate your wisdom." I have given this extract from Senator Stockton's speech to show the infatuation of the Southern delegations at Baltimore, as well as to fix the responsibility of Greeley's nomination where it belongs. Senator Stockton declared in a public speech on Southern soil: "It was your Southern men who did this." And yet there is not within the broad limits of Georgia a supporter of Greeley among the Democrats who pretends that he has any other recommendation than "anybody to beat Grant." It is the excuse of every Southern delegation, we could not elect a Democrat and we were compelled to take Greeley and his platform, and yet in the very opening of the campaign, on Southern territory, a Northern Democratic Senator proclaims: "It was your Southern men who did this—you forced them upon us." What a spectacle! And worse than all, what a humiliation! But the action of the Baltimore Convention is a past issue. The living issue is, must the people of the South obey their dictation? It is a remarkable fact that in this State, so far as I have been able to examine, there has not appeared a single editorial in any Democratic paper recommending Mr. Greeley upon his merits to the high office to which they have nominated him.

If they turn to the past record of his life, it is made up of vindictive abuse of the Southern people and their institutions, and if they look to his promises for the future they find nothing but his assurance, in accepting the nomination, that "he was as much a Republican as he ever was." If they turn to the platform of principles upon which they have placed him, besides some general declarations, in which every

political organization freely indulges; they discover nothing but a pledge to "maintain the union of these States; emancipation and enfranchisement; and to oppose any reopening of the questions settled by the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments of the Constitution," and the recorded fact that "we remember with gratitude the heroism and sacrifice of the soldiers and sailors of the Republic, and no act of ours shall ever detract from their justly-earned fame or the full reward of their patriotism." The thousands of Southern soldiers who sleep in their graves made sacred by their efforts to defend our rights, are not even honored with a respectful remembrance.

I am not drawing upon your sympathy, but am recording what has become history; if it does not arouse your indignation it will, at least, excite your astonishment. Contrasting the life of General Grant with that of Mr. Greeley, no one can fail to perceive the difference. The one indicates no want of humanity, the other exhibits no evidence of kindness or affection. If you take the administration of General Grant in its details or its totality you will not find a measure repulsive to Southern sentiment that did not meet the warm approval of Mr. Greeley. Even the Kuklux law, which every Southern man condemned, challenged the admiration of Mr. Greeley to such an extent that he declared that "on every proper occasion he had advocated and justified the Kuklux act." "I hold it," he said, "especially desirable for the South; and if it does not prove strong enough to effect its purpose I hope it will be made stronger and stronger."

I have sought in vain to find one sentiment ever uttered or published by Mr. Greeley in which he manifested even a common humanity toward the people of the South. His friends say that he went on Mr. Davis' bond, and magnify this single virtue to such an extent as to claim for him a merit that entitles him to be made the Chief Magistrate of this great nation. But give him the benefit of all they claim, how poorly does it contrast with the noble conduct of General Grant in standing by and defending that greatest of patriots, General Robert E. Lee. In the appendix, page 553, of the life of General Lee, by J. E. Cooke, the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, in a tribute to General Lee, upon the occasion of his death, remarks, "When I heard he was about to be prosecuted in a Virginia court for the alleged crime of treason, I wrote to him at once, and with all my heart, that if he believed I could be of any service to him professionally, I was at his command." I received a characteristic reply in terms of friendship and grateful thanks. He wrote that he did not think the prosecution would take place. Hearing, however, some time after that the prosecution would commence at Richmond, I went at once to that city and saw his legal adviser, Hon. William H. McFarland, one of the ablest men of the bar of Virginia. Mr. McFarland showed me a copy of a letter from General Lee to General Grant, inclosing an application for a pardon which he desired General Grant to present to the President, but telling him not

to present it if any steps had been taken for his prosecution; as he was willing to stand the test. General Grant at once replied, and he showed his reply to me. He wrote that he had seen the President and protested against any steps being taken against General Lee, and informed him that he considered his honor and the honor of the nation pledged to him. The President became satisfied, and no proceedings were ever taken. General Grant transmitted to the President the application of General Lee for pardon, indorsed with his most earnest approval. No pardon was granted. I am now contrasting the hearts of the two candidates—in their political opinions there is no difference—in that period of time which embraces General Grant's administration.

One other scrap from the records and I am done for the present. When General Lee reached the point where a continuance of the struggle was madness, he received the following letter from General Grant:

APRIL 7, 1865.

General R. E. Lee, Commanding C. S. A.:

GENERAL: The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate Southern army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,

Lieutenant General Commanding Armies of United States.

APRIL 7, 1865.

GENERAL: I have received your note of this day. Though not entirely of the opinion you express of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender.

R. E. LEE, General.

To Lieutenant General U. S. GRANT, commanding army of the United States.

The result of this correspondence was a surrender, which is as follows:

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE,

April 9, 1865.

General R. E. Lee, Commanding C. S. A.:

In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th instant, I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officers as you may designate.

The officers to give their individual parole not to take arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands.

The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them.

This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage.

This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they may reside. Very respectfully,

U. S. GRANT,
Lieut. General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN

VIRGINIA, April 9, 1865.

Lieutenant General U. S. Grant, Commanding U. S. A.:

GENERAL: I have received your letter of this date, containing the terms of surrender of the army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, General.

Now, when the passions have subsided, and "hands are shaking over the bloody chasm," the calm and reflecting survivors must admit the humanity in every line of this surrender, and General Grant will at least have accorded to him some kind feeling over this general calamity.

How was it with his present opponent, but then his political friend? In the *Tribune* of the 1st of May, on the fourth page, in the fourth column, these were Mr. Greeley's terms:

"But, nevertheless, we mean to conquer them; not merely to defeat, but to conquer; to subjugate them; and we shall do this the most mercifully, the more speedily we do it. But when the rebellious traitors are overwhelmed in the field and scattered like leaves before an angry wind, it must not be to return to peaceful and contented homes. They must find poverty at their firesides and see privation in the anxious eyes of mothers and the rags of children."

What a contrast. The one full of humanity and the milk of human kindness, the other an execrable wretch, belching forth feelings and sentiments that would have disgraced Robespierre in the zenith of his cruelty. Others under the lash of party despotism may feel no dishonor to their victim in supporting Mr. Greeley. I can not so see it. Every feeling of my heart revolts at the sacrifice, and no consideration can influence me to make it.

P. CLAYTON.

LETTER OF GENERAL JOHN A. DIX.

WESTHAMPTON, July 27, 1872.

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 13th instant, asking my aid to procure a speaker for a Greeley meeting at Hancock was sent to me while I was in New England, and I have been unable until now to acknowledge its reception.

I do not understand on what ground you considered yourself authorized to address such a request to me. If you had been familiar with the course of my political life, and equally so with Mr. Greeley's, you could not have supposed me capable of advocating his election to the office of President of the United States without imputing to me an utter abandonment of all political principle.

I am opposed to Mr. Greeley:

1. Because I believe him to be as "unstable as water," perpetually floundering (to carry out the Scriptural figure) amid the surges of opinion, and deficient in all the requisites essential to a firm, steady, and consistent administration of the Government.

2. Because he has usually been found among the most extreme ultraists on the great questions of political and social duty which have been brought under public discussion for the last quarter of a century.

3. Because he has been the advocate (and in this instance persistently) of that most unjust and unequal commercial system which is destroying our mercantile and shipping interests, and heaping up enormous accumulations of wealth in the hands of the protected classes to the oppression and impoverishment of all others.

4. Because he is associated, in relations more or less intimate, with some of the chief plunderers of the city of New York, justly warranting the apprehension that through his complicity or his facile disposition, the same system of fraud and corruption which has disgraced the municipal government of this city may be carried to more infamous extremes in the administration of the Federal Government; and,

5. Because in the darkest hour of the country's peril, when a traitorous combination had been formed to overthrow the Government, he openly counseled the cowardly policy of non-resistance, and an acquiescence in the dissolution of the Union, whenever the cotton States should make up their minds to go.

The coalition which has been formed to promote his election is one of the most extraordinary in the history of parties, in respect both to the discordant elements it embraces and the surrender of principles it involves.

The Cincinnati Convention, called to bring before the people important measures of re-

form, nominated him, greatly to the surprise of the whole country, knowing him, in regard to one of those measures, to be an implacable opponent—nominated him, too, against the wishes and judgment of the chief promoters of the movement, who accepted him, either with an avowed or an ill-concealed disgust, which would be far more creditable to their feelings if the act of acceptance were not utterly irreconcilable with their principles.

The Democratic Convention at Baltimore indorsed and commended him to the support of their party—not as the exponent of any principles they have professed or any measures they have advocated, but as a known and bitter opponent of both—the man, who, perhaps, of all others, has been the most malignant assailant of the Democracy, impeaching its integrity, traducing its motives, and vilifying its character.

The adoption of such a man as their candidate for the Chief Magistracy of the Union is the most conspicuous abandonment of political principles known to party contests:

It remains to be seen whether the great body of the Democratic voters, and the true friends of Reform, can be made parties to this unscrupulous coalition between political leaders.

That General Grant has committed mistakes his most sincere friends admit. But if his errors had been four-fold more numerous, he would, in my opinion, be a much safer Chief Magistrate than Mr. Greeley. He has, in that capacity, done much for which he deserves the thanks of the country. Above all, he has kept it at peace, notwithstanding the efforts of sensation journals and popularity-seeking politicians to provoke hostilities with Spain on the question of Cuba, and with Great Britain on the Alabama claims and the fisheries.

If, regardless of these titles to the approval of his fellow-citizens, and of his invaluable services during the late civil war, they should set him aside for Mr. Greeley; if the latter, a mere erratic politician, untried in any important public trust, should be elevated to the Chief Magistracy of the Union—a Union which would not now exist if his counsels had been followed—and if the man who, of all others, has done the most to preserve it should be discarded for a successor so ill qualified and so unscrupulously nominated and sustained, the example would be most deplorable in its influence on all high motives to political action, and justify the most painful forebodings as to the future.

I am respectfully yours, JOHN A. DIX.

A. B. Cornwell, Esq., Hancock N. Y.

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